

Liquidation

*Silent, like in a graveyard,
Stand the little houses, sunken in sorrow.
No trace of that life has here remained,
Every wall is now black and grey.*

*As I walk down streets empty and bleak,
The echo of my own footsteps [is all that] I hear.
I gaze about: I [can] still perceive the traces
Of the spilt innocent blood.*

*I open the door of a tiny little house,
The sign of poverty is in every corner.
An old cupboard stands open wide;
On a bookshelf, I see a torn prayer-shawl.*

*A Chymesz, a Machzor, a Sidder, a Tchine.¹
Who has need of these sacred books now?
All those who once lived here,
To dark graves were driven away.*

*The Study-hall, bare and deserted,
With smashed windows stands.
Silenced forever is the song of the Talmud,
Which faraway could already be heard.*

¹ [TN: Sacred Jewish books; one of the five books of the Pentateuch, a prayer-book for the High Holidays, an everyday prayer-book, and a prayer printed on a page, respectively. We have retained the original Hebrew words as they were pronounced in Poland in our rendition of the poem for the sake of conciseness.]

*Also the Great Synagogue, the beautiful,
Has like a ruin been left standing.
Its congregants, large and small,
Have all together been driven away.*

*Shrouded in the darkness of night,
The shtetl lies in deep sorrow.
In the morning another day comes,
A day without sun, a grey [kind of] day.*

*Only yesterday were [they] deported from here,
Under a hail of bullets and fire.
Ash and smoke has remained of them –
Of the human life which is sacred and dear.*

*Driven away like dogs by the Nazi murderers,
On their last road of suffering and pain.
The road became wet from the tears,
The air echoed with weeping.*

*May that day be turned into
An everlasting night.
May the sun never shine there again,
For the black power of Satan!*

Jakow Fiszer